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20 March 1986

Executive Registry

36- 1284X

Mr. Reed Irvine, Chairman
Accuracy In Media, Inc.
1275 K Street, N.W., Suite 1150
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Irvine:

It is with real pleasure and a great deal of surprise that we, here in Fort Myers, Florida, area, have noted a sudden and drastic change in the editorial policy of the News-Press, the Gannett newspaper of Fort Myers, about which I wrote to you in January.

On 12 February, we had Mrs. Terry G. Hopkins, President & Publisher of the paper, as the speaker at our monthly meeting of The Military Order of the World Wars, Lee County Chapter. She had the courage to respond to a question period, and I recognize that we gave her a pretty rough time.

Whether it was the effect of your letter of February 16th, or the many letters to both Ron Thornburgh, the Executive Editor, members of our chapter sent, or the effect of the answers to our letters which came from Charles L. Overby, V-Pres/News and Information answering for Allen Neuharth, President of Gannet, to Ray S. Cline, Senior Adviser to the Center for Strategic & International Studies at Georgetown, and Paul B. Flynn, V-Pres., Gannett South, this change has been a complete volte-face from the past positions of this newspaper.

You can understand that we are more than delighted that the reading public in this Southwestern part of Florida, for which the News-Press is one of the major papers, and the only daily in Lee County, now have a chance to see that the left-wingers, the peaceniks, the neo-communists and the like in the area are not the only ones whose views appear in the local press.

As evidence of this dramatic change in this paper, I enclose herewith a copy of the principal editorial from the issue of Wednesday, March 18th, with headline: "That's a fearsome fence." This is the second; the first appeared two or three Sundays ago, and I regret that I do not have a copy of it to send, but it was very similar. You will note with amusement, no doubt, that the by-line at the top reads: "News-Press, Wednesday, March 18, 1986." But my calendars all say that Wednesday was the 19th, and today is the 20th!

As Wendell Phillips advocated so many years ago, the Southwest Florida chapter of AFIO remains "Eternally vigilant---", and so does the Lee County chapter of MOWW. (I was elected president of the former in a recent meeting.)

Sincerely and vigilantly--yours,

W. T. Hornaday

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NEWS-PRESS, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 1986 *****

Opinion

NEWS-PRESS

(813) 335-0200 • 2442 Anderson Ave • Fort Myers, FL • 33901-3987

EDITORIALS

That's a fearsome fence

In the last five years, the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua has imported an array of sophisticated Soviet arms and has received Soviet, Cuban, East German, North Korean, Czechoslovakian, Bulgarian, Libyan and PLO military advisers.

By all accounts, Nicaragua now possesses the largest and best-equipped army in Central America — larger than the combined armies of neighboring Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Costa Rica.

Are Americans to suppose that Nicaragua feels that threatened by its neighbors?

Nicaragua's army totals 75,000 soldiers, backed by as many as 160,000 reservists and militiamen. The Sandinistas have announced plans to expand to some 400,000 — a figure that would put 12 percent of the population under arms.

To complement this huge force, the Sandinistas have roughly 120 Soviet medium tanks, and dozens of other armored vehicles and heavy pieces of artillery. Also heavy ferries to transport non-amphibious tanks and armored vehicles across water.

Where do they plan to transport all these arms?

The Sandinistas have acquired 10 MI-8 helicopters and six AN-2 light transport aircraft from the Soviet bloc. The Soviets donated a dozen Mi 24 helicopter gunships — the kind of gunships the Soviets are using to devastate Afghanistan.

Which of its Central American neighbors is Nicaragua planning to devastate?

Or are Americans to suppose that all this armed might is simply the modern day equivalent of a fence — the kind that makes good neighbors?

A steady stream of weapons poured into El Salvador from Nicaragua from 1980 to 1982 but largely dried up with the emergence of the first major resistance operations in Northern Nicaragua.

That hasn't kept Nicaragua from getting involved in other countries' affairs. News reports have confirmed that the Sandinistas provided money, soldiers and arms to the communist guerrilla forces that stormed the Colombian Supreme Court building last November. In recent months, the Sandinistas have multiplied their threats to invade Honduras and have increased their military incursions into Costa Rica.

If U.S. aid to the Contras in Nicaragua is cut off, it is reasonable to assume the flow of arms into El Salvador will resume, and attacks on other Central American countries will be stepped up.

Is it worth \$100 million to help keep the Soviet, Cuban and Nicaraguan communists from overthrowing the governments of our Central American neighbors?

Of course.